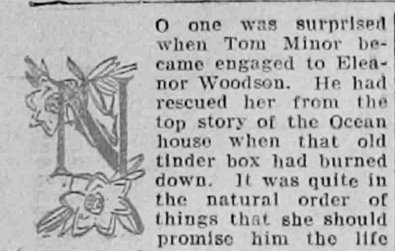


A Page of Short Stories

FOR HAPPINESS



O one was surprised when Tom Minor became engaged to Eleanor Woodson. He had rescued her from the top story of the Ocean house when that old tinder box had burned down. It was quite in the natural order of things that she should promise him the life he had saved.

The summer colony at Clear lake approved the romance that was being unfolded before their eyes and the newly engaged couple were made the guests of honor at luncheon and dinners innumerable.

Tom found the glorification rather a bore. He had made a really sensational rescue, but he had all the normal man's dislike of having a fuss made over him, and had it not been for his engagement he would have fled the spot.

As it was, he submitted to the endless round of entertainments with such grace as he could summon and spent the intervals in coaxing Nell to induce her mother to move to another resort some 50 miles up the coast.

In this endeavor he met small success. Nell was willing to change, but she declared a preference for Sandy beach and Tom preferred even Clear lake to that resort. The discussion always ended by the determination to remain where they were.

That neither was happy was soon apparent. There was no lack of

proper devotion on either side, but Nell's eyes grew heavy and tired and there were times when Tom was more irritable than was proper in a newly engaged man, in whom the joy of life should be springing afresh.

He failed in no duty toward his fiancée, yet somehow there seemed to be something lacking, and little Miss Mortimer, who solaced herself for the lack of romance in her own life by sharing the romances of all those about her, declared that they were being over-entertained.

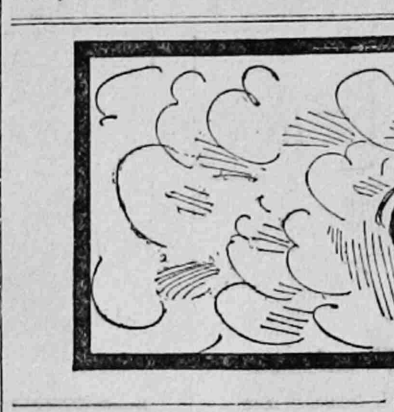
"There are ash-cakes out too often," she explained to the "strange people" in a series of calls. "Of course we all want to show them how glad we are, but do let us give the dear children a chance to be alone and get to know each other better."

The others reluctantly agreed, and so it came to pass that Nell and Tom had left with the sudden cessation of engagements, and Nell was once more able to devote herself to her boat.

She loved the water and handled sail and tiller with the skill of a veteran sailor, and she always won the ladies' cup in the regatta that wound up the Clear lake season. The regatta was held on the lake—which was only a tiny pond—but on the ocean, and Nell declared that she could sail the Undine clear to Bermuda if necessary.

Tom cared little for the water. His tastes ran more to automobiles, for as a child Tom had been taken into the surf until his fear of the water had thrown him into convulsions, and

had left him with a dread of the sea that prevented his learning to swim. He sat gingerly where Nell told him and pretended to like it for her sake.



but he was always heartily glad when they made the dock again.

On the other hand he never could coax Nell to share his automobile gains with him. She had a horror of gasoline cars that she could not overcome.

Miss Mortimer smiled contentedly as she observed the sweethearts depart for a sail and assured herself that her little plan was working well. Tom helped to cast off, then settled himself with the determination not to rise again until they should return to the dock.

This had his beach re-baiting plan.

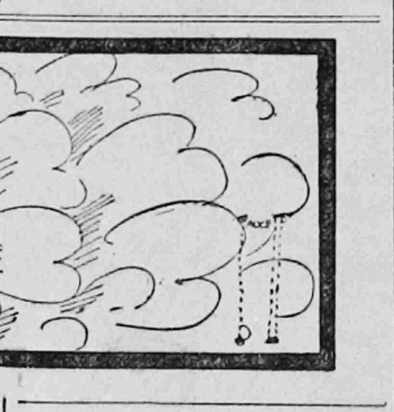
cedure, and Nell quietly humored him, but delay all things were changed. She had to handle the boat alone, and in a struggle with the sail



the trunk, a broken limb tore through the planking of the boat, and the water rushed in its wake.

White and trembling Tom sprang

board on the opposite side, and as he came up after what seemed hours under the water, he felt a hand upon his collar, and Nell's voice called to him to keep steady. She swam back to him and drew him up beside her on the side of the capsized boat.



"Turn about is fair play," gasped Tom when he rid himself of the water that seemed to fill nose, mouth and ears. "I saved your life and you have saved mine. That makes us quits."

"Do you really think so?" demanded Nell eagerly. "Make us quits in full, I mean, so we don't have to be engaged?"

"You don't have to be engaged, anyway," reminded Tom.

"Miss Mortimer said I had to show my gratitude," explained Nell. "It didn't seem right to refuse you when you had risked your life to save mine."

"And you didn't want to become engaged?" he asked breathlessly.

"I—I—," Nell stammered, but she could not say the word.

"It's all right," encouraged Tom. "I didn't want to propose, only Miss Mortimer said it was the only thing to be done in a case like that, and that people were beginning to talk about you because I hadn't."

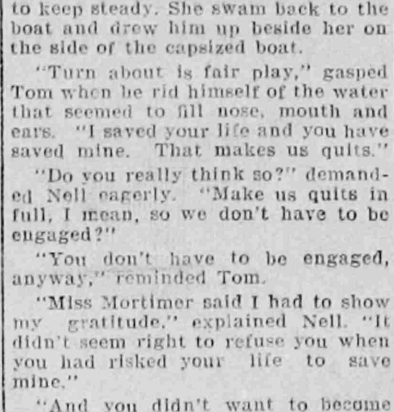
Nell slipped the ring from her finger and handed it to him.

"I'm awfully glad that we found out in time," she said.

"The same way here," answered Tom as he slipped the ring into his pocket.

The arrival of a boat interrupted

their talk and they were hurried into the racing craft and hurried to the shore. They had passed around the point from Clear lake and no one there had seen the upset. As they struggled up the beach in their wet clothes Nell turned to Tom.



"I suppose we'll have to leave here to escape all the gossip that is sure to follow the breaking of our engagement," she suggested.

"I was thinking of going to Sandy beach for the remainder of my vacation," he said and his face grew red.

"Sandy beach?" repeated Nell. "You said you wouldn't go there on any account."

"While I was engaged," explained Tom. "You see Jessie Condit is there with her folks and—"

"I see," assented Nell. "That is why I did not want to go to Wavecrest. It would have been awkward with—"

"I suppose that you'll go there now?"

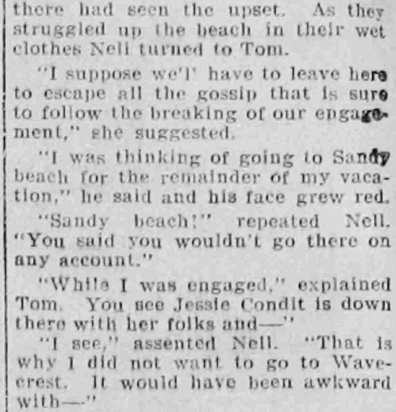
Nell nodded and Tom looked over at the hotel with a reflective eye.

"Don't save any lives before you get safely married," he counseled. "I'm going to be careful myself. I wouldn't even save Miss Mortimer."

Nell laughed at the idea and Tom joined in the laugh. Little Miss Mortimer heard them; the first time they had laughed that way since the fire.

"The dear things," she murmured to herself. "And to think that if I had not managed so skillfully they would still be searching for happiness."

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Narrow Escape.

THE leading lady stroked her head or her thousand dollar bull dog. "I have seen sixteen summers" she began with a far-away look. The low comedian reached for an ax.

"Aw, w," he exploded. "You mean to stand there and say you have seen sixteen summers? You who played the role of grandmother when I was the baby in that old New England melodrama? You—"

But the leading lady touched him gently on the arm.

"Calm yourself, Gaspard," she said quietly. "I merely meant to state that I have seen sixteen summers as warm as this one."

With a humble apology Gaspard withdrew with his ax.

Hadn't Noticed It.

Simpkins—"Your wife is certainly outspoken, isn't she?"

Tinkins—"Not that I know of. I never met any one who could out-speak her."

Much the Same.

"Little candles," quoted the moralizer, "are easily blown out."

"Little salaries are similar, yet different," rejoined the demoralizer. "They are easily blown in."

Another Kicker.

Uncle Abraham was fishing in the mill pond. For the fifth time he had baited his hook only to find some wary denizen of the sluggish pond had got away with the worm.

"Land's sake, Marcus," drawled the old man, as he raked about in the can, "I don't blame Marsy Roosevelt for doing so much kicking."

"What about, pap?" asked his small son.

"Why, dis heah re-baitin' system. It's a perfect nuisance."

A Has-Been.

Hyker—"There goes an ex-pugilist."

Boy (at depot)—"Gimme 10 cents fer carryin' yer grip, mister?"

Traveler—"But I haven't any grip."

Boy—"Well, youse needn't blame me 'cause you ain't got no grip. It ain't my fault."

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"Saw, I don't reckon they do," answered Farmer Gocham. "Ez fur ez I know, they ain't a telescope in the hull township."

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"Well, my son, what of it?"

Little Willie—"Oh, nothing, only if one dog can be placed on a scent I'd like to know how many could be placed on a dollar."

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He (boastfully)—"It takes 'ix generations to make a gentleman, you know."

She (calmly)—"Yes, and what a pity that it only takes one generation to unmake him!"

At the Country Fair.

"Doing a land-office business, eh?" remarked the man from the city.

"What is that you are selling, anyway?"

"Blessed if I know myself, boss," whispered the fakes at the country fair; "it has zigzag lines all over it and when a woman comes up I sell it to her as a skirt pattern and when a man comes up I sell it to him as a guaranteed and genuine map of Mars."

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"They say that time flies," remarked the inquisitive one.

"Of course I fly," responded Father Time. "If I traveled in an automobile I'd always be breaking down on the way."

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Tomlin—"I was surprised to hear that you and Mrs. Weeds were engaged. I had no idea you would marry a widow."

"Ho-ho," he hadn't. It was an idea of her own.

The Woman Question.

"I was handed another installment of the eternal woman question this morning," remarked the benedict.

"What's the answer?" queried the young bachelor.

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"It does seem strange?" queried the innocent bystander.

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RAINBOWS

HUGE raindrop fell upon Kate's check and, mindful of her best hat, she fled to the first doorway until the storm should pass. It was only a summer shower, but she wanted the hat to wear at the picnic tomorrow and she hurried for shelter.

It happened to be the open doorway of a business block. A fire had emptied the place of tenants and there was a smell of wet, burned wood that was unpleasant.

But still more unpleasant was the fact that the doorway was already occupied and by Harris Hitchcock, of all persons.

"If my presence distresses you," he said coldly, "I might find some other

hotly, "will you kindly permit me to pass?"

Hitchcock barred the doorway. "I will go," he said, quietly. "Believe me, I did not mean to offend."

Before he could step out into the deluge she had thrust him aside. He did not anticipate the move, and he was thrown off his balance. Before he could recover himself Kate stood in the doorway, gathering her skirts in one hand.

Just at that moment a dazzling flash shot from the heavens and rent a tree on the opposite side of the street while the discharge was accompanied by a terrific clap of thunder.

With a little cry Kate turned and blindly sought Hitchcock, who sprang forward to catch her. She threw herself, sobbing, into his arms, and, oblivious to all else, sought to calm her. Gradually the sobs softened, and

REAL ACTING

YOU'RE cross and hateful and I never want to see you again," declared Molly, as she flung herself away.

"I'm not cross and hateful," declared Beverly Gideon. "If you insist upon going on the stage you are at liberty to do so. But you cannot blame me for wanting my wife to be something more to me than a name on the billboards and in the dramatic papers."

"You want a household drudge," she proclaimed. "That is all you want. I want to let the world see my genius burn brightly, not smolder, a sacrifice on the household altar."

Gideon shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose you will not mind playing tonight," he said. "It's part of the dramatic drudgery to make love to some one you hate, you know. It will be good practice."

"I shall not let your hatefulness spoil my chances," she said. "You know what it means to me tonight. I think you are trying to make me break down on purpose."



BEVERLY.

"Not at all," he said. "If you will trace this conversation back you will find that it was yourself who started it."

"Then I shall be the first to stop," she declared as she turned and left him.

Molly Waterbury was at once most delightful and most irritating.

She had been the leading woman of the Carston dramatic club ever since she was old enough to wear long dresses. Gideon, who liked acting as an amusement, had played opposite to her for so long that it had seemed only natural that he should play the part of lover when there was no rehearsal and so they had become engaged.

He had always regarded his chatter of the time when they should go up on the stage together as the dream of an ambitious girl, but this morning she had told him that Denslow, the manager, had promised to attend the performance and if he found her capable he would give her a chance in one of his companies.

Instead of rejoicing over her good fortune Gideon had objected to hav-

ing her adopt a stage career and words had followed that had resulted in the return of the engagement ring.

The little stage of the Carston Lyceum buzzed like a beehive that night. Distressed young women ran about declaring that they never could act with the great Denslow sitting out in front.

The stage manager hurriedly sent out to borrow the comments for the stage, determined that the celebrated producer should compliment his setting.

Gideon set gleefully in one corner while through all the din passed Molly, calming the hysterical girls, conferring with the stage manager and utterly oblivious of Gideon's presence.

Every little while she ran to the peep hole in the curtain, and when at last Denslow entered with her parents the entire company lined up to get a glimpse of the celebrated man.

In the first two acts Molly played the part of a capricious young girl so fearful of being wooed for her money that she scorned all suitors. Gideon gave her perfect support, suppressing himself in his endeavor to give her the attention of the audience, yet always giving the assistance she needed.

In the third act, tired of her caprice, he was about to leave the company, and she, for the first time, realized that she really loves him and pleads with him to stay, while he, thinking that she is merely seeking to torment him, fights off his yearning to take her in his arms.

If Molly's work in the earlier acts had been capital, now she surpassed herself. Somehow the lines seemed to fit into the real situation. The feeling that Gideon's love-making in the earlier scenes had been perfunctory made her aware of what she had given up, and she threw into her lines a passion and feeling that caused Denslow to turn to her father and say, "I'll make a star of her."

At last, with a final sweep of passion, she worked up to the climax and the curtain fell as she threw herself into Gideon's arms.

Twice the curtain rose, but instead of the bowing stars it showed only a continuation of the picture with Gideon still holding her in his arms and whispering to her.

Then the light went out and Denslow came hurrying back on the stage.

"My dear Miss Waterbury," he cried, "I am delighted with your performance. We shall have you a star in a few years."

"I don't think I want to go on the stage," she said.

"But to hide such talent under a bushel! It is an artistic crime. I never saw better acting than in that last scene."

"That's just it," said Molly frankly. "You see, it wasn't acting at all."

Denslow caught the glint of Gideon's eyes. "I see," he agreed, though he comprehended only dimly. "Let me congratulate Mr. Gideon upon his acting and his success."

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Was He Lazy?

"I've got it, announced the married man, returning from his call next door. "He was very sorry that he hadn't brought it back, but he'd been so busy he overlooked it."

"I suppose," that night, happened, said his wife, "I've known you to forget things now and then."

"Not furnace shovels," said the married man. "I bet you never knew me to do that trick. Too busy to think of it. Say, if that isn't the limit! I'd give up \$2 for a back seat under the balcony to see him busy once. There he was in his pajamas, you don't see it. It's funny. I think I am entitled to a little extra sleep after a week's hard work, and I don't come down to breakfast in pajamas. Not without a bath robe over them, anyway."

"I wondered if you remembered that," said the married man's wife. "I feel pretty certain that you would have reminded me if I had forgotten. I can always depend upon you for such things," said the married man. "There are some other things that you can forget mighty easily, but not any little slips I may happen to make. I wouldn't have come down that way either, if you hadn't been throwing 19 fits about the breakfast getting cold. But it's



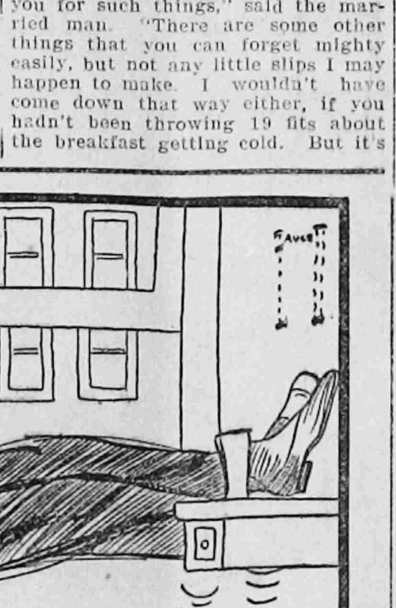
YES, HIS NEIGHBOR WAS LAZY.

dawdling over his breakfast. Breakfast at 10 o'clock in the morning, and not dressed at that!"

"I suppose he thought that on Sunday morning he might indulge himself," said the married man's wife. "It was past 9 when you got down to breakfast."

"There's a big difference between 9 and 10," said the married man. "An hour, isn't there?"

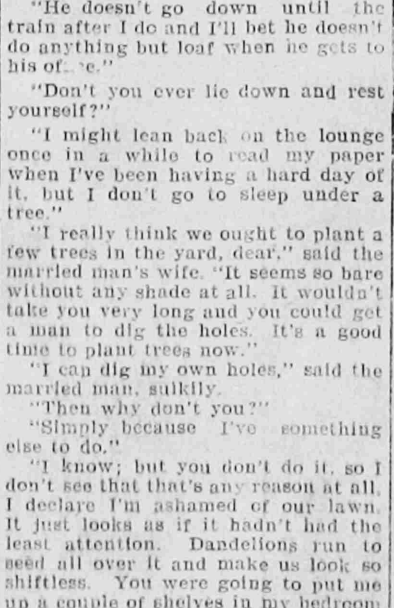
"An hour is a big difference. If



all right for that nice Mr. Peters. Anything he does is quite proper. The latest dressed white man I ever ran across."

"I don't know what makes you think he's so lazy," said the married man's wife. "I'm not defending him or saying that everything he does is right, but I can't understand why you think so ill of him."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the married man. "You've forgotten how he



lay on the flat of his back under that catapla of last summer, haven't you? I should think you'd remember when you told him yourself how lazy he looked. Give him a patch of shade and put his pipe in his mouth for him and that's all he wants. I don't see how he supports his family."

"I suppose he goes down town and works, the same as you do," ventured the married man's wife. "He doesn't get down until the train after I do and I'll bet he doesn't do anything but loaf when he gets to his office."

"Don't you ever lie down and rest yourself?"

"I might lie back on the lounge once in a while to read my paper when I've been having a hard day of it, but I don't go to sleep under a tree."

"I really think we ought to plant a few trees in the yard, dear," said the married man's wife. "It seems so bare without any shade at all. It wouldn't take you very long and you could get a man to dig the holes. It's a good time to plant trees now."

"I can dig my own holes," said the married man, sulkily.

"Then why don't you?"

"Simply because I've something else to do."

"I know; but you don't do it, so I don't see that that's any reason at all. I declare I'm ashamed of our lawn. It just looks as if it hadn't had the least attention. Dandelions run to seed all over it and make us look so shabby. You were going to put me up a couple of shelves in my bedroom closet about two months ago. I suppose you haven't done that because you had trees to plant."

"Spring's the right time of the year to plant trees," said the married man. "It's waste of time to plant them now. Get a carpenter if you're in such a hurry for your shelves."

"I don't believe Mr. Peters is much lazier than you are, Robert," said the married man's wife.

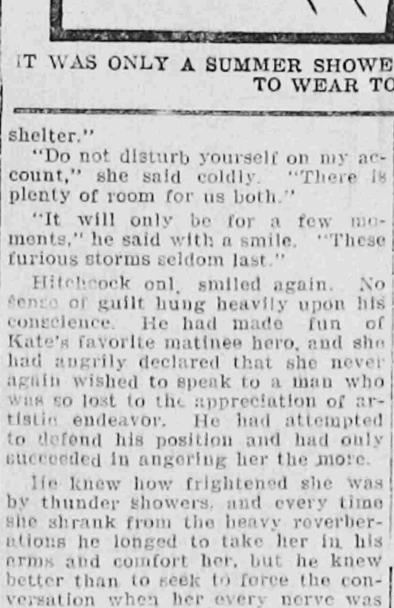
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shelter."

"Do not disturb yourself on my account," she said coldly. "There is plenty of room for us both."

"It will only be for a few moments," he said with a smile. "These furious storms seldom last."

Hitchcock only smiled again. No sense of guilt hung heavily upon his conscience. He had made fun of Kate's favorite matinee hero, and she had angrily declared that she never again wished to speak to a man who was so lost to the appreciation of artistic endeavor. He had attempted to defend his position and had only succeeded in angering her the more.

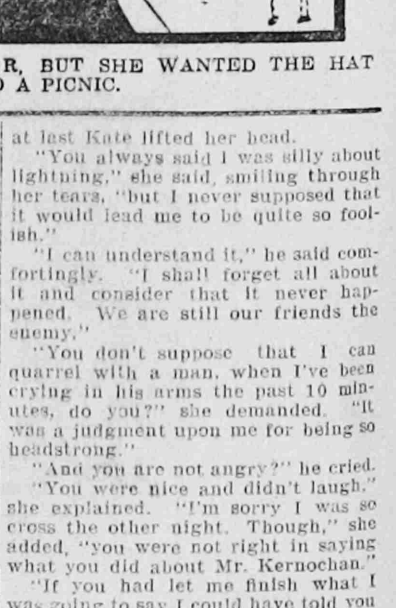
He knew how frightened she was by thunder showers, and every time she shrank from the heavy reverberations he longed to take her in his arms and comfort her, but he knew better than to seek to force the conversation when her every nerve was tingling. But when an exceptionally heavy peal rent the air, he sprang forward and grasped her arm.

"Don't be afraid," he said reassuringly. "That struck nowhere near here. There isn't the slightest danger."

Kate regarded him indignantly. He had sometimes teased her about her fear of lightning, and she was keenly sensitive about her peculiarity.

In her overwrought nervous condition she believed that he was again tormenting her and, at his touch, she shrank back, her face white with anger and her eyes blazing.

"Since it appears that I am not going from annoyance here," she said,



at last Kate lifted her head.

"You always said I was silly about lightning," she said, smiling through her teeth. "I don't now suppose it would lead me to be quite so foolish."

"I can understand it," he said comfortingly. "I shall forget all about it and consider that it never happened. We are still our friends the enemy."

"You don't suppose that I can quarrel with a man, when I've been crying in his arms the past 10 minutes, do you?" she demanded. "It was a judgment upon me for being so headstrong."

"And you are not angry?" he cried.

"You were nice and didn't laugh," she explained. "I'm sorry I was so cross the other night. Though," she added, "you were not right in saying what you did about Mr. Kernochan."

"If you had let me finish what I was going to say I could have told you my reason," he said with a smile. "Mrs. Kernochan or Mrs. Cassidy, rather, is suing him for divorce because of his cruelty. I am his attorney, which is how I came to form my estimate of his character. He was in jail once for wife beating."

"Harry," she said, "he bent his head to catch the whisper."

"What is it, dear?" he asked.

"You won't beat me when we're married," she asked.

"I should say not. Look, Kate, it's clearing up. Let's go and get the ring."

"It was such a lovely storm," she sighed contentedly as they stepped out onto the street.